



NIAGARA
RIVER

FROM
LAKE TO LAKE.

Original Etchings
By Amos W. Sangster.

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NIAGARA
RIVER AND FALLS

FROM

Lake Erie to Lake Ontario

VOLUME II

A SERIES OF

One Hundred and Fifty-three Original Drawings

ETCHED ON COPPER BY AMOS W. SANGSTER

EDITED BY JAMES W. WARD,

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BUFFALO N. Y.

1889

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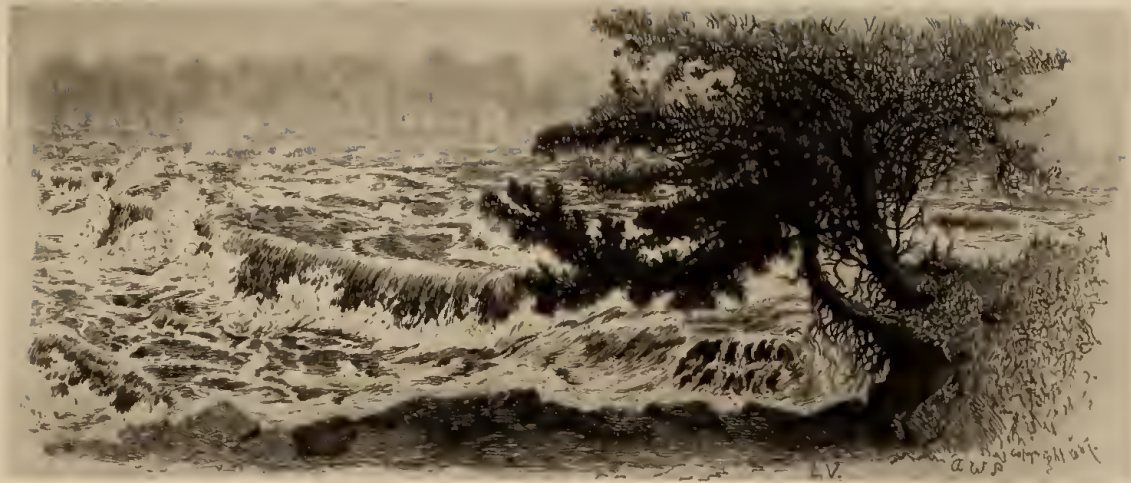
VOL. II.

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IT was at Schlosser's ferry-landing, already referred to, that the small American steamboat called the *Caroline*, was cut loose from her moorings, one December night, some fifty years ago, by a daring party of Canadian militia, and sent blazing down the River, as contraband of war; an act that seemed to be excused, but not easily justified, on the ground that the boat had invaded Canadian waters for illegal purposes; being employed as a carrier of insurrectionary supplies and reinforcements to parties in avowed rebellion against the Canadian Government. The store-house and ferry that many years before these occurrences existed at this place, though called by the same name, should not be confounded with Fort Schlosser, which was an English stockaded post standing on the River-bank nearly a mile below the ferry. This Fort, so called, was erected in 1760, by Capt. Jos. Schlosser, on the site of a previously existing entrenchment, known as "Fort du Portage," which had been built by the French, in 1750, and was maintained there by them, with a small garrison, until 1759, when, being threatened with an attack by the British troops under Sir Wm. Johnson, who had just captured Fort Niagara, they destroyed all their works by fire, and crossed to the other side of the River. The conspicuous architectural object that still stands near the site of the Fort



as it has stood now for over a hundred and twenty-five years—an enduring memento of the military occupation of this part of the River—and popularly known as “the old stone chimney,”—was also built by the French troops: but not as a part of their defensive stockade or Fort; it was attached to their storehouse and barrack buildings, and these were placed some distance below the stockade. This chimney was so substantially constructed, that it passed through the fire unharmed, so that the English troops, when they rebuilt the Fort, utilized it as a part of their own storehouse. Fort and barracks, and all else that stood upon the place, have long since vanished, but this storm and time defying shaft still stands, a sturdy and impressive monument, a sombre and silent monitor of the vicissitudes that impend the stratagems and schemes of wily man.

Tonawanda, the little Island, in fact as well as in name, is scarcely distinguishable, as seen from the River, or from the banks of its imposing opposite neighbor, from the main land, so narrow is the little stream that gives it, after many years of patient struggle with sedge and sand, its present insular character. In the pristine days of its unshorn and wild-wood seclusion and beauty, when it was but a vine-fringed knoll of clustering trees and blooming shrubs, a mere leaf-clad, bird-tenanted islet, floating on the green current of the always beautiful River—it was truly an object of acknowledged beauty, and much coveted as a place of residence. For which purpose, indeed, it has been many times owned by several admirers, and as many times held purchaseable “with a little money.” This was the untrimmed little fairy ground over which Nathaniel P. Willis, the dainty editor of the New York Mirror, “sighed,”—as he had often sighed over many another denied felicity and evasive illusion of life—to think that so “charming a paradise,” it was possible, if only, alas, the “little money” demanded for it could be conveniently had, to “buy for one’s own.” “One’s own” it has been at several periods since his day, and so is, happily, at the present time.

Pecuniary enticements and business speculations as a matter of course soon intruded upon the seclusion of even so concealed and lovely a nook as this; and “a little money” has proved, as in many another case, more than a match for the mere romantic fancy for a green and bosky bit of the ancient forest; for though it has had several owners since it came into possession of the State, the Island has never been long occupied by any one of them as a place of residence; for which, in truth, it was at first, with all its wild and tangled beauty, but very illy suited. It has upon its eastern extremity, sheltered by a fine girdle of forest trees, a substantially constructed brick mansion, ample in its dimensions and solidly and tastefully finished interiorly. This house was erected, for his own residence, by Stephen White Esq. of Salem Mass. who took possession of it in 1836, but sold it, after



about six years occupation, to Wm. Wilkeson Esq. of Buffalo. Mr. White's removal from his pleasant ancestral home in the old puritan town of his birth, and so far from the cultivated and sympathizing circle of his family and friends, to the sequestered solitude of this lonely hermitage, was not wholly inexplicable. Mr. White was the nephew and principal legatee of Capt. Joseph White, an old and respected citizen of Salem, who, one December night, was murdered in his sleep, in the most stealthy, cowardly and deliberately planned manner. In this cruel deed Mr. White, through the machinations and secret plottings of the really guilty parties in the crime, was wrongfully, but openly, implicated. It is true he was at once exculpated from even the least suspicion of any complicity in the horrible affair. But the appalling reality of the awful event hung like an evil shadow over the home of his youth, and over his own heart, and in a few years he fled from its depressing influences, finding enjoyment and rest in this quiet and tranquil retreat. But here, too, time has since wrought its capricious changes. With the reservation of the charming open park immediately connected, at its upper end, with the now much enlarged and tastefully refashioned "White Mansion," the residence of Mr. T. S. Fassett, its present owner, Tonawanda Island, shorn of many of its ancient attractions, is chiefly notable now for the convenience it affords for extensive business enterprises of which it is to be an important centre, and its superior dock-yards and general shipping facilities, which are still in course of extension, in connection with the immense lumber trade that displays at this point so remarkably successful a development, and holds out so brilliant a prospect for the future. The narrow channel that separates the Island from the main land is crossed by an iron swing-bridge, erected by the New York Central Railroad Co. to facilitate the receipt and delivery of its large amount of freight, chiefly of timber and its manufactured products, to and from the docks and present and projected warehouses and wood-working mills of this busy entrepot. The business occupations that already animate the solitudes of the Island are mainly extensions of those previously described as so energetically carried on in the adjoining town: in view of all which it can hardly pass without our special wonder, that while our generous River pours annually down this natural water-way, the lavish waste of hundreds of millions of tons of free water, the power derived at second hand, and at greater cost, from the burning of the products of mother earth, which must be brought to the works from a long distance, should be preferred by those who are likely to have, prospectively, such unlimited occasion to use it.

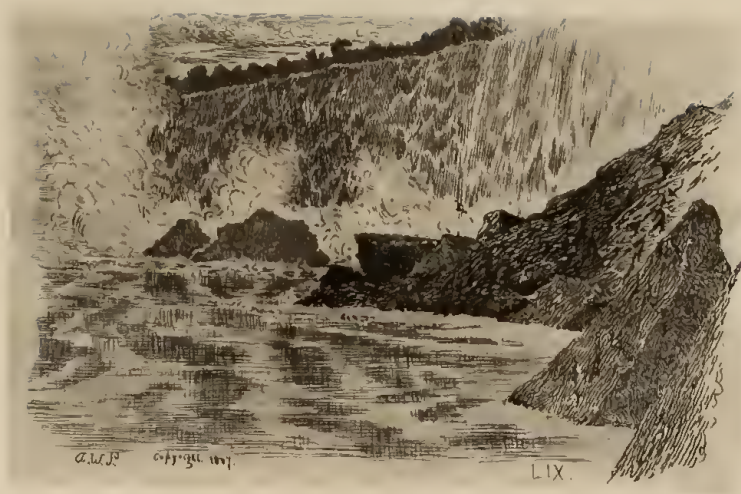
The course of our wayward Niagara is not a straight one; in its short run of thirty-six miles, from its head at Buffalo, to its junction with Lake Ontario, at Fort Niagara, it describes a very much curved line. On the American side, from Black Rock to the village of La Salle

at the mouth of Cayuga Creek, though pursuing generally a northerly bearing, it is bent in the shape of the letter S; from La Salle it flows westwardly in a pretty direct course to the horse-shoe escarpment, from which point, after its tremendous plunge, it makes a sharp right-angled turn to the north, in which direction it continues, with only some slight deviations, until it glides gently into Lake Ontario, having descended 360 feet below its height at the level of its out-flow from the foot of Lake Erie; 160 feet of which it makes, in one sweep, one-third of a mile in extent from cliff to cliff, at a single leap.

Opposite Grand Island, on the northern shore of the River, at the mouth of the languid Cayuga Creek, and about four miles below Tonawanda, lies, in hidden and poetic repose, the dreamy and unobtrusive little hamlet of La Salle; an oft-mentioned place, whose importance, which is not at first view very apparent, aside from the blooming prettiness of its semi-insular position, and its fine broad water views, consists mainly in its historical associations with the past, and its present prominence as a trading point for fruit dealers. Its local activities, even in this speciality, being of an intermittent character, may not be very conspicuous to its piscatorial and squirrel-hunting visitors, but it is nevertheless the central mart and depot for the productions of the long and splendid series of peach-orchards, strawberry beds, and vineyards, that stretch in almost uninterrupted sequence along the River bank, covering nearly the whole of the broad level plateau that stretches from this point on the American shore to the Falls. Several thousand acres of this fertile region, within the perpetual hearing of the deep thunder-tones of the mighty cataract, are under remunerative cultivation, directed by practical fruit growers, and the territory occupied with this important industry is annually enlarging. In fact the Niagara lands, on both sides of the River, in this arenaceous section of its course, is largely in possession of cultivators engaged in this extensive and now successfully established enterprise. At the annual periods of maturity, the busy scenes presented, in these fruitful fields, in connection with the gathering, basketing, and making preparations for shipping to market, of their immense produce, are curiously animated and entertaining.

The name of this "insignificant locality," as Mr. Marshall calls it, pertinently enough, in his lucid and elegant sketch of the distinguished explorer after whom it is called—more to the honor of the place itself, than to the world-renowned adventurer for whom the compliment was intended,—is derived from that of Robert Cavelier de La Salle, who, while still a young man only twenty-three years of age, came to Canada, from the city of Rouen, early in the summer of 1666, to try his fortunes as an explorer in the vast and then untraversed wilderness of the New World. The French at this period, were rapidly extending their possessions along the northern shore of the St. Lawrence, and the Religious Community of



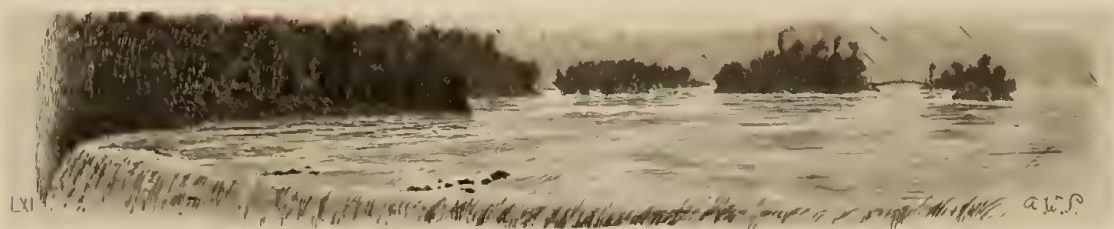


St. Sulpice had established their Seminary on their own lands in a clearing on an island near the Canadian shore, which became in time, the nucleus of the City of Montreal. One of the priests at the Seminary was Cavelier's brother, and with him, naturally, he first made his home. The general purpose of his adventurous expedition was the exploration of the western parts of the American continent, in the visionary, but seriously conceived expectation of discovering a new and shorter overland route to China. Without doubt, the hopeful prospect of possible territorial acquisitions, to his own profit, as well as that of his country, formed an equally persuasive allurements through all his subsequent and amazing adventures. It may well excite our special wonder, that a gay young courtier, liberally educated, gentle mannered, accustomed to the brilliant society of a polished French city, and surrounded with the luxuries and refinements of a home of ease and opulence, should voluntarily relinquish an existence of so much contentment and promise, and expose himself to the perils and privations of a homeless life amongst the savages of the primeval wilderness. La Salle was loyal, civilly and religiously; to his King and to his church; but he was of a positive and independent spirit, and early learned to decide upon any proposed course of action for himself. He dreaded and distrusted the Jesuits, who were at this time actively spreading their nets far and wide over the region the exploration of which he was preparing, at so much personal sacrifice, to undertake; and quite aware that the chief maxim of this crafty fraternity was that of rule or ruin, he warily kept aloof from them; at the same time, though not a zealot, he was devoted to his religion and promoted in many ways its temporal interests. It is impossible to give here even a brief outline of the extraordinary and romantic career of this intrepid and sagacious discoverer. His story, glowing with the spirit of heroism and adventure, has already been told in the fascinating compilations, drawn from original documents, of the indefatigable French antiquarian, Pierre Margry, and after him, by Dr. Parkman, the accomplished American historian; and again in the briefer and charming narrative, by the late O. H. Marshall Esq. of Buffalo, concerning La Salle's long association with the Seneca Indians. But the whole Niagara and Ontario region, from the St. Lawrence to the most western of the great Central Lakes, was in a sense La Salle's own ground. He traversed it east and west, and far to the northwest, on foot and in canoes, literally living with the savages in the depths of the dark forests. He was the first, and in sailing vessels of his own construction, to attempt the perilous navigation of the Niagara River and Lake Erie, and was familiar with the forest paths and Indian trails on both sides of these waters for many hundreds of miles; so that his name is inseparably connected with the early chronicles of the whole of the vast territory stretching from the St. Lawrence to



the Illinois River, and thence to the Ohio and the Mississippi, and could not consistently be passed over with a mere mention. La Salle, in the language of one of his companions, "was one of the grandest men of his age; of admirable energy, and capable of undertaking every sort of discovery;" and he not only undertook, but accomplished a great many, and all of them of the highest importance to his own country and to America. His courage and power of endurance, were amazing. He conceived his plans with judgment and sagacity, and prosecuted them with unflinching resolution. He was not always right in his convictions, it is true, and he sometimes acted without accurate information, while the rigidity of his discipline and his natural reserve, and apparent sternness of manner, often repelled from him those whose counsel and co-operation might have been serviceable to him. But he was a man of great self-reliance, and of unimpeachable integrity. His written history, as Gayarre notes, "is so much like romance, that it is likely to be classed as such by posterity." But the existing records of his ingenious but hazardous enterprises are already so abundant and authentic, both in his own letters and despatches, and in the corroborating testimony of his contemporaries, that the brilliant gleams of romance that illuminate his marvellous career are seen to be only the radiant after-glow of the almost inconceivable reality.

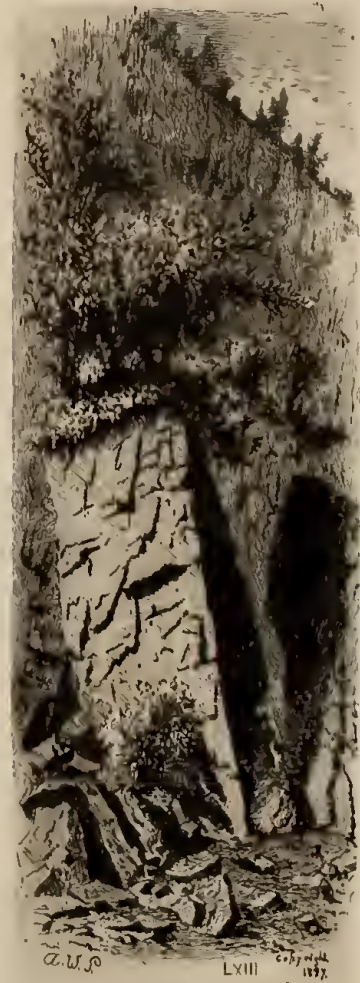
He was always in motion, and he always moved with a purpose. He was given to no manner of frivolity, and never lost an hour in idleness. Seven times he crossed the ocean; and in the intervals of these tedious but necessary voyages to and from France, he journeyed thousands of miles, often several hundreds of miles at a time, across the plains and through the wildernesses of this then unknown land; much of the time on foot, sometimes for many weary weeks alone, plodding on, insufficiently clad, with a will that no discouragements could relax, almost destitute of food, through the snows and storms of winter, and often delayed

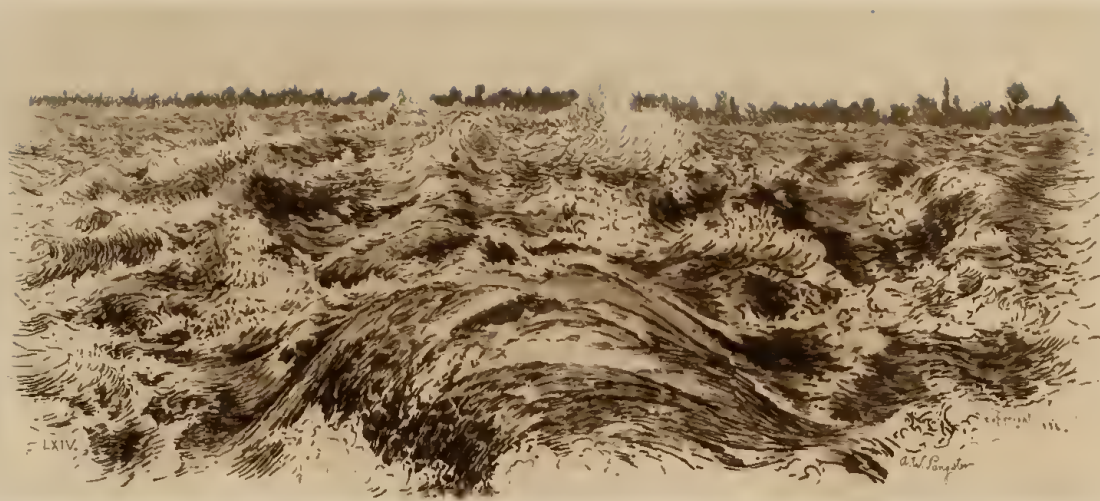




and enfeebled by sickness and hunger, sometimes only reaching his goal at last in a state of complete exhaustion, with his feet wound with rags, his hair matted and tangled, and his clothes torn to shreds. The untimely end of a life so laborious and so serviceable to his country, was pitiful enough. On his last return from France, with a larger number of men than ever accompanied him before, he descended the Atlantic coast to the Gulf of Mexico, which he entered with the intention of reaching the mouth of the Mississippi, and so confirming the great discovery he had previously made of this great outlet, by descending the River. But he was ignorant of the features and landmarks of this part of the American coast, and the sailing masters of his ships, miscalculating their longitude, he lost his reckoning, and passed the mouth of the River without knowing it. After a tedious and vexatious search for its recovery, which only ended in disappointment and disaster, he landed his men several hundred miles west of its true position. He continued the search by land; but after many weeks of exposure in the swamps and slimy marshes of an unknown shore, enduring unparalleled suffering and privation, he determined, with a few companions, leaving what remain-

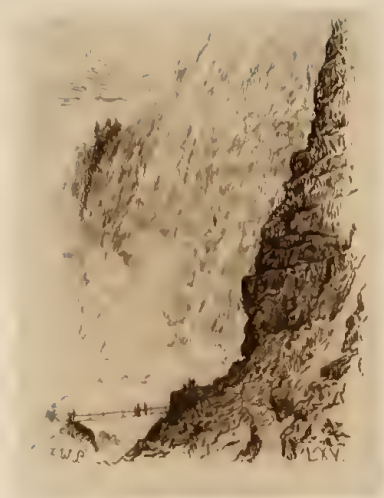
ed of his men in temporary barracks, to return, on foot, unprovisioned and scantily clad, to his fort on Lake Ontario. It was the last desperate hope of relief, for himself and the wretched colony he was to leave behind him. But it was a hope never to be fulfilled. Owing to a mutiny in his small camp, he was shot, on the eve of his departure, by a concealed conspirator. His emaciated body, well-nigh stripped of its tattered garments, was thrown aside and abandoned to the wild beasts of the cane-brakes. And so ended a most valuable, eventful, and honored life; for without question, as Dr. Parkman justly says, this was "one of the most remarkable explorers whose names live in history." A man, writes Monette, "whom no misfortune could daunt, and no peril could alarm; a martyr to the cause of truth, and to the welfare of his Country." And yet he was treacherously "left to die a murdered exile, after suffering in mental anxiety and physical toil, more than a thousand deaths." And this little village, nestling in the grove on Niagara's banks, where he laid the keel of his Griffin-prowed schooner, and that so airily vaunts his name, more to its own honor than to his, is his only monument, in all the grand region over so much of which he was once Lord and Governor.





DIAGONALLY opposite the village of La Salle, and planted on both banks of the turbid little Creek of the same name, may be seen the unimportant but pleasantly situated and historically memorable town of Chippewa, where the visitor will be reminded of some of the most desperate and decisive events of the disastrous border strife of 1814. The village stands about three miles above the Falls, and the walk thither along the River's gently undulating banks is always one of unwearied delight. The descent of the River from this point to the cliffs of the Great Cataract, presents a series of water views of especial attractiveness and beauty. The clear bright stream, expanded to three times its average width, lies here, when the winds permit, as quiet and smooth as a motionless lake, over which, and even across to the opposite shore, experienced oarsmen may row their light canoes with ease and safety. The shore and water views, presented from this point in endless variation, pleasingly diversify the congenial and fascinating scenery of this always picture-forming River; and its caprices and surprises prove as enticing to the student of Nature's mysteries, as they do to the mere sympathetic admirer of her many curious phantasies and versatile delineations. A short distance below Chippewa where the River has a width of nearly two miles, it will be noticed that this lake-like expansion begins to contract in breadth, and to gain rapidly in velocity. The stream, by the angular approach of its rocky banks, narrows, in the distance of a mile, to a width of three-fourths of a mile, where it becomes the surging and turbulent portion of the River known as the Rapids.

A view of these Rapids from either of the abutting shores, is one no visitor to the Falls should omit. It is a scene of wonder, second only, in majesty and unwearied fascination, to the gorgeous Cataract itself. It is the sublime but gentler prelude to the deep-rolling cadence of the thundering waters, so soon to follow. It is a scene of unrestrained disorder and wild uproar. The whole broad sheet of the spray-sprinkled River now rushes on with frantic speed, as if eager, after its long and devious journey of twelve hundred miles, to accomplish at last its mighty final act, and be done with it. The impetuous water pours with eager and reckless speed over the angular projections and submerged dikes and sharp ridges of its rocky and shallow channel, and is soon lashed into fragments, and becomes dispersed in spattering cascades and leaping jets of crystal spray. Sixteen hundred thousand tons of water are thus continuously dashed over these hidden rocks, and are finally driven over the trembling precipice of the Cataract, every minute of every year. Here is exhibited one of Nature's grandest processes, in operation; here we witness one of her most effective agencies in active work, and begin in a measure to comprehend the power of this prodigious



volume of water, that will soon again cohere and swell into that immense cylinder, which, urged onward by the force of this tremendous momentum, at last rolls over the precipice, and hurls its enormous weight upon the more fragile rocks that form its unstable base. It becomes quite clear, upon a little reflection, that under the continued action of a process so energetic, something, sooner or later, must be forced to give way; and observation shows us, as a fact, that the entire mass of the rocky strata that once filled up the long canyon of the River, from the site of its present barrier to a line near its entrance into lake Ontario, has, in the course of centuries, whose number can only be approximately estimated by the amount of work seen, visibly enough, to have been accomplished, given way and been removed. The evidence of this long continued and still visibly progressing retrocession is self-recorded in the rocky walls of the deep excavation, and may be easily read; the only conclusion justified by existing indications being, that the deep gorge, seven or eight miles at least in extent, through which the panting River pours its agitated waters, has been chiseled and hammered out, and the crumbled and ground up material dragged away, by its own gigantic and patiently applied forces. The scores of centuries reasonably demanded for the completion, so far, of this astonishing piece of work, so deliberate in its methods, so slow in its daily progress, and so minute in its details, has been provisionally estimated, but the discussion must always remain in subjection to possibilities and undetected conditions, secular and temporary, whose just value is still the subject of much speculation and controversy, not here to be entered upon. The grandeur and extent of the work that has been done, is determinable by inspection; the time required for its execution, at the fastest admissible rate, must be computed on a scale of commensurate magnitude.

The breaking away and removal of the Rocks that form the irregular-shaped escarpment of the Cataract, as the result of the continual shock and tremor of the falling water, has greatly changed, even within the the space of forty years, the lineal direction and contour of the Cataract as a whole; but especially is this the case with regard to the peculiar curve known as the Horse-shoe. The present angular and V-like shape of this, the grandest feature of the main Fall, docs not now suggest the appropriateness of the term. The center of what was once fitly called the arch of the Horse-shoe has been rent, and the breach is carried back to quite a sharp angle, from the two sides of which, and apparently facing each other with an evident approach to parallelism, the parted water seems to fall in two opposing streams, which plunge into each other before reaching the deep boiling gulf below.



It is not generally perceived that the direction of the general flow of the River, in its short journey of thirty-four miles,—in which distance it makes a descent, from Lake to Lake, of 328 feet,—is not a uniform one; its deviations from a straight line are very great. Its most conspicuous bend at Grand Island has already been mentioned. From that curve to the Rapids the flow of the current is due west; sweeping over the ledge of the Cataract precipice at the present head of the grand canyon, the River, becoming more and more compressed between its lofty and gradually approaching walls, makes an abrupt right-angled turn in a direction a little east of north, but before it reaches the whirlpool gorge it is again bent back to its northerly course. Escaping, after a brief but furious struggle, from its angrily resisted confinement within the walls of the grand amphitheatre of the vortex, it returns, by a gentle curve, to its normal direction, and quietly glides into the waters of Lake Ontario with a slight inclination towards the west.

The water that pours in such a lovely sheet of green and garnet jewels, over the American ledge, is the overflow of a sort of natural waste-wier, or narrow branch, cut off from the main stream, and parting from it a short distance above the group of the Sister-Islands. The channel, over the shallow and rock-strewn bed of

which the water leaps and plunges with such impetuosity, is only the submerged extension of the American shore, connecting it with the promontory of Goat Island, the front escarpment of which, so picturesquely dividing the Cataract into two unequal and quite distinct Cascades, is continuous with the perpendicular precipice of the American Fall, and like it lies in a line parallel, or nearly so, with the northerly trend of the eastern wall of the gorge; in fact, it does not constitute any part of the great barrier that crosses the main River; nor does it lie in the same direction. This narrow branch or flume leaves the River, somewhere between Grass Island and the Three-Sisters, and works its own way, by a shorter overland cut, to the brink of the American precipice. It was the opinion of Prof. Tyndal that, should the Cataract of the Horse-shoe continue to disintegrate and undermine its manifestly unstable support, as undoubtedly it will, and when the consequent recession of the gorge has reached back to the rocks of the Sister-Islands, the water will cease to flow through this narrow channel, being turned once more into the parent stream, and that this submerged portion of the American shore will then become dry land again. Existing appearances would seem to justify this apprehension—though its possible realization is too far in the rear of our era to occasion any present alarm; but the high authority of Mr. G. W. Holley re-assures us in the possession of our beautiful Cascade, by the statement that there are hidden channels and rocky dikes lying between Grass Island and the Sisters Group, which will prevent, at least in part, this threatened draining of this dashing and tumultuous stream. But this foreshadowed

change in the character of this grand and alluring feature of our inconstant River, of which the pitiless Professor gives us timely warning, would be no greater, either in kind or degree, than many that have occurred in past periods of its chequered and diversified career. That Goat Island will escape the devastating action of the receding waters, is scarcely to be supposed; but its removal, whether partial or entire, would only make more certain and speedy the predicted drainage of the American channel and the consequent desiccation of its majestic Cascade. The changes, known to have taken place at the Cataract, and in its vicinity, in two hundred years, that is, from the period of the earliest preserved description of it, have been many and very great. Since 1840 it has been cut back, at the Horse-shoe, at least a hundred feet; several very large slabs and immense blocks having fallen within that period. Every break of any magnitude carries away many feet of fractured and loosened rock, and the gaps and changes thus produced in the marginal outline of the cliffs, have become very perceptible. By the comparatively rapid recession of the central fissure of the Horse-shoe, where the backward excavation of the front wall of the barrier is most marked, its verge line has notably lengthened in forty years.

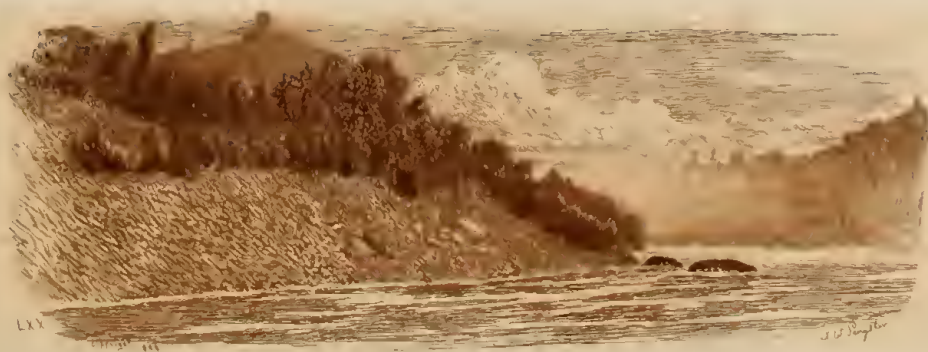
No description, it may be said, not even the simplest formulated observation or recollection, historical, sensational, or pictorial, of the Great Cataract and its wonder-waking surroundings, would be possible, in this late day, without the recurrence, in the production, of the same ideas, the same forms and qualities of expression, and still more surely, the same facts, and expressed often in the same habitual words, and illustrated by the same self-suggested fancies, that have been made use of by some previous, but really not more original observer. This so oft recurring repetition of words possessing some especial and significant appropriateness of application, is due, manifestly, to the meagre supply of them. For purposes of relation, as well as for illustration and imagery, one's vocabulary of admiration is monotonously restricted.

The gorgeous Cataract of Niagara, a thing of beauty forever, equally lavish of its inspirations and its charms upon all comers, is always stupendous, and always glorious, and its beauties and splendors are as sublime and overwhelming to one really sympathetic admirer as to another. All its praises must be sung in the same key. Monopoly of expression before such a majestic spectacle, is no more admissible than monopoly of emotion. It will be as excusable as it will be inevitable, that any half dozen enraptured gazers on this sublime "cadence of waters," having, one after another, given verbal utterance to their surprise and enjoyment, the next half dozen who shall become thrilled with the same wondrous fascination, will find their enthusiasm involuntarily revealed in the very language already used by their predecessors.





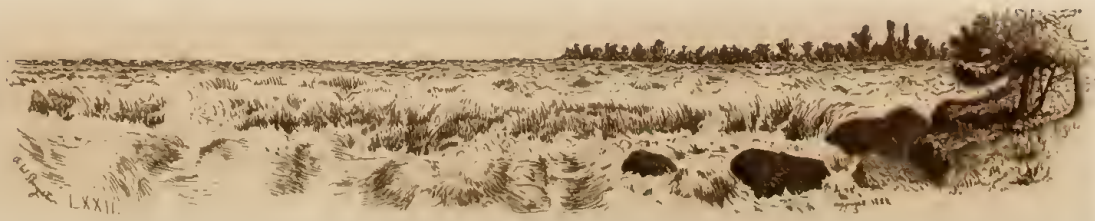
It will be testified to by many, no doubt, that under the transcendent influences of a power so imposing and so majestic as Niagara, man's deepest emotions will be silent. The soul feels itself spell-bound in the presence of such commanding and self-asserted majesty, such ineffable dignity. Man must be still, to know the full supremacy of this gorgeous display of Nature's affluence. The deepest sensibilities are not vehement; nor are the finest human experiences readily communicable. The leaping jets and noisy breakers are over shallow water. But words will be intrusive, and often in the most exalted moments; and then is it seen that the impulsive sensations—it might not be quite just to say commonplace,—such as most usually, in moments of excitement, seek expression, and generally collapse, in extemporised definitions, assume by simple necessity the hurried guise of such exclamatory utterances as are common to all, and at readiest command. A glance at some of these locutions, of the representative sort, that have survived the treacherous custody of ink and paper, will not here be out of place, and will prove more to the purpose than renewed and pitilessly handicapped attempts to describe what has so often, heretofore as now, been felt to be indescribable. And notably so by the writer of the first attempted description of the Falls ever made. This was Louis Hennepin, the Catholic Missionary who visited the place in company with Chevelier de La Salle in 1678. Hennepin's ideas were never very lucid, nor was his accuracy exemplary; as is shown in the confused and exaggerated account he gives of "the prodigious cadence of water which falls down in a surprising and astounding manner" over the "horrible precipice." The simple-minded priest reminds one of Domine Sampson in presence of his "prodigious" array of books; *prodigious* was the measure of Hennepin's





astonishment; and perhaps it is as good a word as any for this "wonderful downfall" of water. But this was his favorite word; as when he speaks of "the brinks so prodigious high," or states that "when this *prodigious* quantity of water comes to the fall, there is a din and noise more deafening than the loudest thunder;" or, again, that "the two torrents made by the isle throw themselves off its end with *prodigious* force," and "tumble down into an abyss six hundred feet in depth." This rash miscalculation as to the height of the Cataract is not to be explained on the supposition that he included in it the depth of the abyss or gulf, into which the waters tumble; for he says in another place, that "the waters tumble down into the gulf, altogether, (at the Horse-shoe,) with all the violence that can be imagined, from a fall of six hundred feet, which makes the most frightful Cascade in the world." The whole account, correcting its exaggerations, is not without interest; though the world has long sympathised with the honest narrator's wish, which he assures us he "wished an hundred times," on account of his evident incapacity, "that somebody had been with us who could have described the wonders of this *prodigious* Fall, so as to give the reader a just and natural idea of it, and cause in him an admiration of this *prodigy* of Nature,

as great as it deserves." One may smile at Hennepin's piteous excuse for writing so wretched an account of so grand an affair, but the honesty of his plea will not be disputed; "I have endeavored," he says, "to give as just an image of it as I can." The man who does the best he can, when it is that or nothing, may be excused. His account, not published till nearly ten years after his visit, was illustrated by a print, which presents an aspect of the River and Falls, quite impossible from any point of view now imaginable; nor can it be supposed to have been engraved from any drawing taken upon the spot; the scene, as drawn, requires a height above, and a nearness to, the Cataract, not then in any known way attainable.



Hennepin is not the only enthusiastic spectator of the Great Wonder, who, from the mere judgment of sight, has largely over-estimated the apparent height and other magnitudes of this Cataract. In a French official report, written in 1718, in which it is briefly mentioned as "the grandest sheet of water in the world," it is stated to have a fall of from two to three hundred feet." Guesses of this hasty sort, have been many and various, and more often wrong than right, few having ventured upon any such estimate with the careful and experienced eye of F. Charlevoix, the French Missionary, who wrote a short notice of the Falls in 1721. The Jesuit Missionary Raguenaud, writing in 1648 simply says, that Lake Erie, "two hundred leagues in circumference," "falls into Lake Ontario over a Cataract of frightful height." Not long after, the Sulpician priest, Father Galliné, mentioning the Falls, which, however, he had not seen, states that they are "on a River forty leagues in length that empties into Lake Ontario," and that the Cataract "is one of the finest in the world, falling from a rock higher than the tallest pines, or about two hundred feet." The Baron La Hontan, Lord Lieutenant of Placentia N. F., made a wilder guess as to the probable height, than Hennepin. He visited the place in 1687, and in a letter of the following year says;—"as for the waterfall of Niagara, it is seven or eight hundred feet high, and half a league broad; and towards the middle is an Island that leans as if ready to fall." Charlevoix's more cautious estimation, was made with admirable and really approximate exactness. Speaking of what he calls "the noblest Cascade perhaps in the world,"—I found, he says, "that the Baron La Hontan had committed such a mistake with respect to its height and figure; as to give grounds to believe he had never seen it." * * * "For my own part, having examined it on all sides, I am inclined to think we cannot allow it more than a hundred and forty or fifty feet." Charlevoix adds, "the sheet of water falls upon a rock, and there are reasons which induce me to believe, that it has either found, or perhaps, in time, hollowed out, a cavern of considerable depth." A shrewd surmise, the latter alternative being, doubtless, the fact. One of the points in evidence of his conjecture, still worthy of note is, "that the noise it makes is so very hollow, resembling that of thunder at a distance;" an effect due to the great depth, probably over two hundred feet, of the cavernous excavation into which it plunges. It is this deep resonant thunder-tone, this far-rolling pedal-point, that peals up from the depths of this unfathomed hollow, that is, at times, and indeed at all times, when not hindered by opposing winds and other confusing obstacles, carried to such incredible distances; as far, even, it has been recorded, as the City of Buffalo. Wm. Gardiner, in his Music of Nature, says that "probably the most appalling sound in Nature is that of the Falls of Niagara, the roar of which may be heard at a distance of forty miles"!





EXTRAVAGANCE in statement cannot properly be charged to all who have from time to time undertaken in moments of exuberant fancy to record their impressions and recollections; but exact data are not at every traveller's call, and appearances, where the attention is absorbed and bewildered by so many overpowering influences, as has been often proven, may be very misleading. The Abbé Picquet, who visited the Falls in 1751, found little more to say of them,—after describing the whole Cascade as “prodigious by reason of its height and the quantity of water which falls there, and on account of the variety of its falls,” which he reckons to the number of “six principal ones divided by a small island,”—found little to say of them, farther, than that “they produce a singular symmetry and wonderful effect.” Peter Kalm, the Swedish naturalist, who the year before Picquet's visit had spent part of a day at the place, determined, wisely, to see the affair “with his own eyes,” because he had “found by experience that very few observe Nature's works with accuracy, or report the truth precisely.” So he “thought he had better try to get a pretty good idea of it” for himself. He saw only two falls, one on each side of an island, and exclaims at the sight—especially, of the western one, which is “in greater abundance and seems,” before it reaches its ledge, “to almost out-fly an arrow in swiftness,”—“when you see this, the hair will rise and stand upright on your head! Words cannot express how amazing this is; you cannot see, without being terrified, so vast a quantity of water falling from so imposing a height! And when the water is come down to the bottom of the rock, it jumps back to a very great height in the air, and is as white as milk or snow, and all in motion like a boiling caldron.” This is graphically said, but his engraved sketch of it is only a slightly changed copy of Father Hennepin's picture, with the “third Cascade,” over Table Rock, across the front of the Horse-shoe, left out; the scene really representing the Cataract as a very poor and second-rate affair. But Kalm declined “to be esteemed a false wonder-maker,” and had his cautions in regard to all curiosities of this sort; he was disposed, rather, to be precise and critical. “I have seldom,” he says, “been so happy as to find the wonderful things related by others,” and he had discovered, even, “that it was the way of travellers to magnify everything, as Hennepin had done, with regard to Niagara.” He had found “that since Hennepin's day, this Fall, in all accounts that have been given of it, has grown less and less;” for himself he preferred to see things just as they are,” and would trust only “his own eyes.” But not always, it would seem; for he tells us he got “the King's Engineer to give him under his hand, measured with mathematical instruments,” the true perpendicular height of the fall of water; which was found to be “precisely one hundred and thirty-seven feet.” The linear



breadth of the Horse-shoe, "where it runs in a semi-circle, he recons to be about six arpents," an arpent being, as he also informs us, one hundred and twenty feet. A statement that does not sustain the claim he makes that "you may depend upon the truth of what I write." He naively adds, "you must excuse me if you find in my account no extravagant wonders; I cannot make Nature otherwise than I find it." Making many allowances due to later and more accurate knowledge, Kalm's account, as merely a traveller's note, is not without a venerable interest.

The first appearance of the Niagara Cataract in history, excepting a mere allusion to it in 1536, by J. Cartier, the French explorer, who only knew of its existence from information derived from the Natives,—is in the letters of Samuel de Champlain, written in 1603. Champlain merely says of the Cascade, which he never saw himself, that "it is somewhat elevated, and there is some little water there, *laquelle descend*;" which was really all that he knew, at that time, about it.

We find, however, upon his map of New France, which was printed in 1623, that the Falls have a very conspicuous position, and are supplied with a brief note, which relates that "they are at the extremity of Lake St. Louis, (Ontario,) and are very high and where many fish are brought down." This fish story, sometimes enlivened with ducks and other smaller birds, has an air of probability, and has had many repetitions since this early note.

Few can have looked on this marvel of Nature, says an old writer, "with so cold an eye as not to have wished to make some record of the emotions it occasioned." Liancourt de Rochefoucauld seems to have indulged in no such enthusiastic desire. He mentions his visit, in the year 1795, to the Falls, but with as few words as possible, and in singularly cool and formal phrases. "The water," he writes, "tumbles"—is this rural word a prompting from the earlier writers, or is it a usual and customary suggestion—"tumbles perpendicularly on the rocks. Its color, at times a dark green, and then a foaming white, everywhere displays a thousand variegations as it is struck by the rays of the sun, according to the state of the atmosphere, the time of day, and the force of the wind. It is impossible to describe the impressions which this Cataract made upon our minds; fancy had presented pictures of it which seemed to be exaggerated, yet were much inferior to the reality. To attempt a description of the enthusiasm which seized the soul at the view of this magnificent spectacle, would exceed my powers." Or any one else's, he might have added; for, as in the fine apostrophe of Mrs. Sigourney—

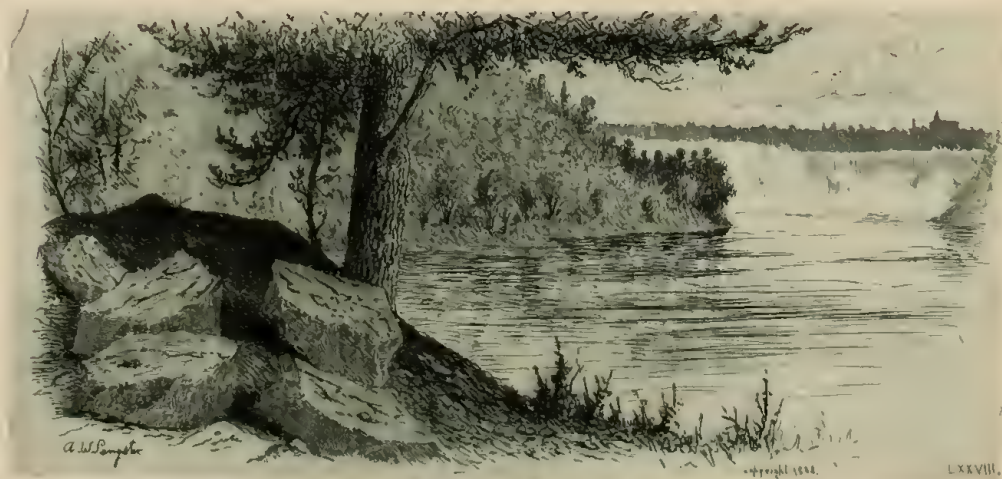


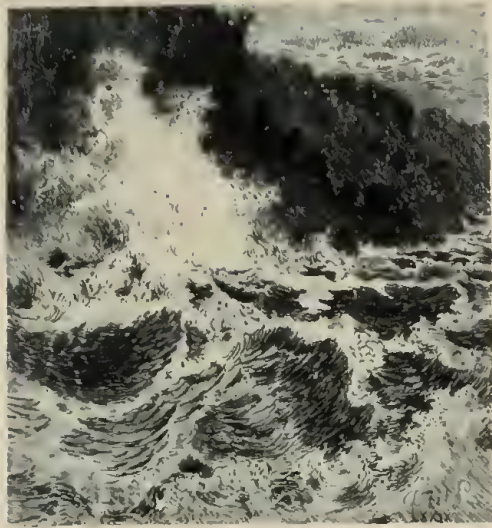
To tint thy glorious features with our pencil's point,
Or woo thee with the tablet of a song, were profanation.



Jonathan Carver, a New England explorer of some note, traversed the northern territory of British America in 1767, and included in his reports a few brief notes respecting the Niagara, of which he observes, with commendable accuracy, that "the waters, by which the Falls are supplied, take their rise nearly 2000 miles to the north-west, and passing through the Lakes, at length rush down a stupendous precipice one hundred and forty feet perpendicular, and in a strong and rapid flood, that extends eight or nine miles below, fall nearly as much more, and soon after, the River empties into Lake Ontario. The noise of the Falls may be heard an amazing way. I could plainly distinguish them more than 20 miles, others have said that at times, when the wind sits fair, the sound reaches fifteen leagues." In these noisy times, we are rather disposed to think that "others" must have been mistaken; but in the primeval quiet of a still hour in Carver's day, with a gentle wind

flowing down the canyon, the heavy subterranean rumble may have been heard at distances quite as great as any that we find recorded in the discredited annals of the olden time. Many really excellent and well characterized pictorial representations of the Falls have from time to time been produced, of which, perhaps, none are more interesting or artistically effective, than several that date back to the last century; and notably, should be first named of these, the fine and vigorous drawing of the entire front view of the Cataract, made by Lieut. Pierie, of the British Royal Artillery, in 1768. This picture though its point of view is not quite clear, nor its perspective strictly verifiable, is nevertheless a very good thing. It was reproduced in oil, a few years later, upon a canvass six feet by five, painted by Richard Wilson, an English artist of cotemporary celebrity. Of this picture there was published in London, in 1774, a very superior steel engraving, executed by the skillful hand of Wm. Byrne, who was justly classed among the most eminent English engravers of that period. The following note, from the artist was appended to the print; "This stupendous Cataract is nearly a mile wide, and falls over a perpendicular rock 170 feet high, which interrupts





the passage of the River Niagara for some miles." Assuming the general fidelity of this picture, it is evident that many and great changes in the verge line of the Falls have taken place since it was drawn by Lieut. Pierie.

Isaac Weld, an English landscape painter, of some note in his day, travelled through this portion of the United States in the summer of 1796, and in the published account of his journey has presented us with four very artistically executed and fairly accurate views of the Cataract, sketched from as many different points of view. These pictures, judging from the engravings of them in the artist's book, are quite pleasing, and represent, generally, the natural characteristics of the place, though they fail to indicate

correctly either the true height of the two sheets of water, or the impressive wildness and magnitude of the adjacent scenery. He gives also a good ground plot of the Falls, but errs as many another has done, in his measurements; giving six hundred feet as the breadth of each of the two divisions. But he appreciated the grandeur of the display, exclaiming with enthusiasm and truth, "the astonishment excited in the mind of the spectator by the vastness of the objects he here contemplates, is great indeed; and few persons, coming here for the first time, can for some moments collect themselves sufficiently to be able to form any tolerable conception of the stupendous scene before them." In an entertaining chapter he gives a very agreeable narration of his rambles about the cliffs and spray-sprinkled groves of the locality: and notices the fact, "that since the Falls were first discovered, they have receded very considerably;" and he adds, that "the more the River's course is studied, the more reason is there to suppose that the conjecture that the Falls were once situated at Queenston is well founded." Standing at the foot of the Cataract, "your senses," he well says, "are appalled by the sight of the immense body of water that comes pouring down so close to you, and by the thundering sounds of the billows dashing against the rocky sides of the caverns below." Weld makes mention of a tradition which he picked up in his rambles in the vicinity of the Falls, that the portion of it known at that time, as now, and even more suggestively than at present, as the Horse-shoe, once "projected in its centre." There is good reason for admitting the correctness of the tradition; since it is evident that the crest line of the Cataract's wall, connected with the American shore at the high bluff of Goat Island, probably once reached the Canada side of the gorge somewhere about where the Prospect House now stands.



Capt. Jonathan Carver, an English officer and traveller, who in 1767, paused in his long journey of seven thousand miles "amongst fierce and untutored savages" to view "those remarkable Falls which are esteemed one of the most extraordinary productions of nature at present known;" but recalling that they had, even then, "been very frequently described," was contented to "observe only," that "the waters by which they are supplied, taking their rise nearly two thousand miles to the northwest, and passing through the Great Lakes, during which they have received constant accumulations, at length rush down a stupendous precipice, one hundred and forty feet perpendicular;" he adds, "through a strong rapid, that extends a distance of eight or nine miles below, they fall nearly as much more, and the River soon after empties into Lake Ontario." This is concise, and as a traveller's statement fairly correct, the height of the Falls, in this instance, being a little understated. Carver affords another testimony as to the distance the "roar" may be heard, which he considered "an amazing way;" affirming that he could plainly distinguish the noise, in a calm morning, more than twenty miles." He repeats, on the questionable and occult authority of "others," that at particular times, when the wind is right, "the sound reaches fifteen leagues." The frequency of the repetition of this last affirmation is curious, and indicates an early belief in its possibility.



In Feanning and Collyer's Geography, published in 1765, we find a correct appreciation of the Falls, the River running, we are told, "with great violence towards its perpendicular fall, which is an hundred and fifty feet; no words can express the consternation of the traveller at the sight of so great a body of water violently thrown from such a height upon the rocks below, from which it rebounds, all converted into foam, as white as snow. The noise of this Cataract is frequently heard a distance of fifteen miles, and at times much farther." John Payne, in his System of Geography, published in 1791, refers to "these stupendous Cataracts, which are not equalled by any other falls of water on the globe," with "their cloud or pillar of vapor, resembling smoke," and says, in reference to the sound, that "the noise produced by the Falls, may in calm weather, be distinctly heard a distance of twenty miles, some asserting that it has reached as far as fifteen leagues."

Robert Sutcliff, an intelligent and observing English gentleman connected with the Society of Friends, travelled through the northern portion of America in 1805 and 6, and wrote an unusually entertaining and instructive account of his journey, which was not published, however, until some years after his death. The pages of his journal that relate to the River Niagara, and the then little known territory through which it flows, are very interesting, and afford us another instance, in this case careful and circumstantial, of recorded personal impressions of first views of the world-renowned wonder. From him, also, we get another and at last local and more precise evidence concerning the distance that "the noise of the Falls could at times be heard; "I thought," he states, "I could very distinctly hear it while riding along a few miles from Buffalo Creek, or about twenty-four miles from the Cataract;" and he relates, also, the following incident; "I met," he says, "a reputable looking farmer, driving a team of four fine oxen, who told me that he sometimes, (when the wind was

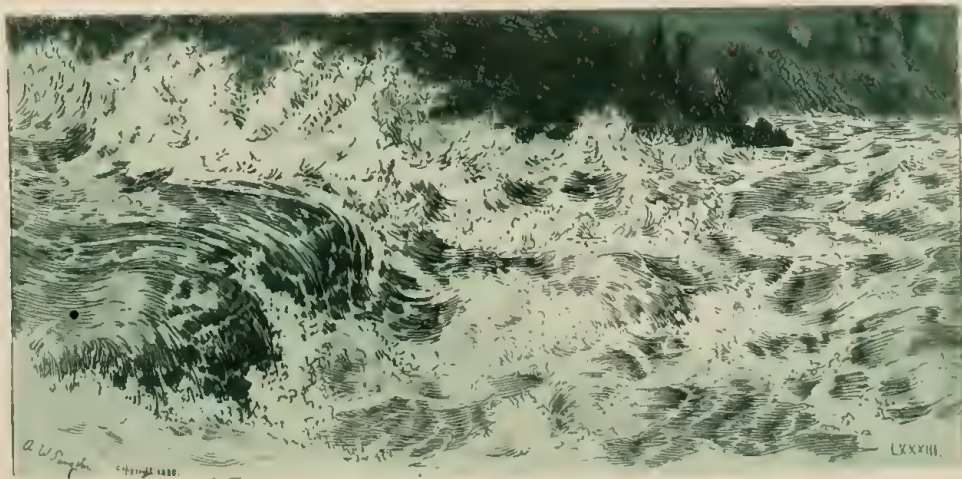


favorable and the air calm and serene,) heard the Falls very plainly at his residence, which was forty miles from them." "I came," he further states, "to Crow's tavern, in Buffalo Town, on Buffalo Creek, just at its outlet into Lake Erie, and Crow, the keeper of the inn, told me, that in cold weather, when the wind suited, the noise of the Falls was generally heard in Buffalo." The "cold weather" specification shows correct natural observation. Sutcliff, after the manner of all previous, and later, indeed all visitors, was curious in the matter of measurements, and notes, on this point—really rendering unnecessary any newly worded description,—“immediately below the Cataract the River is confined between two steep banks, that form a deep winding valley, through which the waters flow in their course to Lake Ontario; this valley is terminated by a perpendicular rock, fifty-three yards in height, which, running across, forms an angle pointing up the River, over which this vast body of water precipitates itself, with a noise so tremendous that it can be scarcely described. At the top of the rock is a small island which divides the Cataract into two parts; the greater part of the water pours over the rocks at the extreme head of the valley, and the rest on one side of it;” (that is, as few seem to have observed, on “one side” of the valley.) “I was informed,” he continues,

“by Joseph Ellicot and his brother, at whose house I lodged, that they had twice measured the Falls, and found them to be one hundred and fifty-eight feet in height, and about eighteen hundred yards in width between the opposite banks of the River.” The figures given by different writers to express these measurements are quite variable, but Ellicot's have been long considered to be fairly accurate. Later estimates give 164 feet, as the perpendicular descent of the water on the American ledge, and 150 as that of the Horse-shoe; while for the extreme length of the entire crest, from shore to shore, we have now to assume about 4750 feet.

Another equally trustworthy but more distinguished explorer of our attractive frontier, who visited the Falls about the same period as the genial philanthropist just quoted, was Timothy Bigelow, of Massachusetts; a man of mark, and of great and diversified learning, and justly esteemed one of the most active and brilliant thinkers of his day; “the man,” as one of his biographers, in reference to his great success as a lawyer, styles him, “of fifteen thousand causes.” He made his visit to the Falls in the summer of 1805; and his bright and entertaining “Journal of a Tour to Niagara Falls,” which was given to the world by his grandson, Abbott Lawrence, only a few years ago, is replete with pleasant reminiscences and anecdotes relating to persons and events of that early period of our history. A few lines from this discerning and inquisitive observer's notes will help us to see this natural wonder, as others before us have seen it, long ago. “One of our company,” he writes, “mentioned

the remark of a celebrated traveller, that on approaching the city of Rome, he felt an involuntary inclination to run, lest the object of his curiosity should disappear before it could be gratified;" and he adds, "we realized a similar eagerness in approaching the Cataract of Niagara." His observations on the Great Rapids are concise and appreciative; "the River is near two miles wide, till it comes within a mile and a half of the perpendicular fall; it then begins to contract and to increase in rapidity. The Rapids between the Great Island and the main shore are about a mile in extent; and considered either across or lengthways of the current, the whole extent is a scene of tumult and uproar. The water is broken into milk-white foam, which is tossed in spray by the conflicting billows many feet into the air. * * The grandeur of this scene is only exceeded by that of the ocean in some of its wildest moods; and were there nothing else in the vicinity worthy of attention, this alone would be resorted to from great distances, by the curious, as a just subject of wonder and astonishment." The descending inclination of these Rapids, from their assumed commencement, a little below Chippewa village, he computes to be fifty feet; which estimation, in comparison with more correct and recent measurements, is short only two or three feet. Speaking of the perpendicular depth of the Falls—"this descent," he says, referring to the Horse-shoe, "has been variously estimated; it was fashionable a century ago greatly to exaggerate it, and the affected precision of some modern travellers, who state it at one hundred and thirty-seven feet, some even giving a fraction of a foot, is quite as absurd. The calculation does not admit of accuracy, owing, not so much to the agitation of the waters, as to the thick cloud of vapor and sprays which conceal not only the place of concussion but a considerable part of the falling column. We were satisfied, from our own observations, that one hundred and forty feet could not be far from the truth; and perhaps there are as many who would exceed as there are who would fall short of that estimate. The water in the Fort Schlosser Fall, so called, (the American cascade,) is of a snowy whiteness, more so than at the Horse-shoe, and its depth is twenty feet greater, and it is more perpendicular, because the water descends less from the Rapids." Ten years after the publication of Mr. Sutcliff's lucid description, Christian Schultze, a young American traveller, tarried a few days at the Falls, and in the journal of his tour through the State, gives a very readable presentation of their most notable features, making especial mention of "the volume of clouds you will always observe hanging over the Falls, even while yet at a great distance from them;" nor, he well says, is there any exception to this, even in the brightest days; the only perceivable difference being in their height and color. In a clear day they appear high and white, while in heavy cloudy weather they sink low and have a smoky appearance."





THE beauties and glories of Niagara—its lovely surprises, and its ever renewed, and never exhausted pleasures, are not confined to the great central site of the Cataract, with its wonderful “cadence of waters,” whose majestic waves go on incessantly, moment after moment, roaring and plunging into the seething gulph below. This constitutes, of course, the first, and time-absorbing attraction, and is unquestionably the most impressive and imposing feature of the place; but it does not comprise, by any means, the entire combination of all its unnumbered and exquisite charms. Thousands of hasty visitors who have been content to give all their time to the enthralling contemplation of the mighty Cataract itself, have left the place with much of its more tranquilly captivating, but really unsurpassed loveliness, unenjoyed. The impulse of haste in the midst of the many competitive enticements of Niagara, is quite intrusive and inharmonious. He who would drink in all the sweet influences of the place must leave his hurry behind him, must release himself from all concern about dinner-bells or railroad whistles. The inspiration of loveliness and wonder that pervades this whole glorious region, should be free from all such untimely and trivial invasions.

Chas. J. Latrobe, the enthusiastic young traveller who accompanied Washington Irving, in his adventurous tour to the far west, in 1832, in the account he gives of his frequent rambles along the then wooded banks of the scenic River, records his impression that it was not only the volume and beauty of the waters of the Cataract that gave the place its celebrity, but “every surrounding object,” he writes, “seems to be on a corresponding scale of magnificence,” and of beauty, he might have added: and he points especially—and it is truly one of the grandest and most unexpected revealments of the locality—to the broad expansion of the River above, where sky and water meet on the long horizon line; where the on-rushing stream is fringed with the crests of countless breakers, and flanked by “luxuriant, verdure-clad banks;” and also, to “the extreme beauty of the long forest defiles,” and to the precipices and the sloping hill-sides, and “the floating masses of vapor slowly ascending from the mystery and gloom that conceal the foot of the Fall, and hovering like clouds in the blue sky above; all combining to form a series of views, in which sublimity and picturesque beauty are enchantingly blended.” So also Miss Murray, our English visitant, in 1854; admitting that the Falls, “are quite as magnificent as imagination could desire,” she exclaims, “there is no end to the beauties of Niagara; it should be visited for weeks at a time, instead of days, for the great variety of views which are on all sides;” and as well, she adds, for the ever-changing appearances of the Falls themselves. It was the observation, also, of Miss Martineau, in 1837, that the allurements of Niagara extended far beyond the sound of its deep and sullen mutterings. This lady, gifted with refined perceptions, remarks, speaking of



her first view of the Falls, from the roof of the Clifton House, "I think the emotion of this moment was never after renewed or equalled." She was struck, as many an other discerning observer has been, with the appearance of the seeming hesitation and slowness with which the green, solid looking water of the Horse-shoe rolls over the brink; "a majestic oozing," she says, "which gives a true idea of the flood, but it no longer looks like water." Of her impressions generally, she also affirms, quite in accord with other sympathetic idealists, that "throughout,

the beauty was more impressive than the grandeur." It is curious to note the difference of experience that prevails in regard to the occurrence, in the minds of observers, of these two distinct emotional impressions, not always concurrent, of beauty and grandeur. It has been thought, that, of the two so very familiar expressions, spontaneous, in fact, from the lips of all ardent spectators, of "how beautiful" and "how grand," the first will be found to have the most frequent utterance, as a first exclamation. Because, perhaps, there are more minds susceptible to the gentler influences of beauty, than to the severer stress and austerity of grandeur, and because, also, the sentiment of beauty is of itself more restful and agreeable, than the more imperious and oppressive sense of grandeur, of which some indeed soon grow weary. "We sat down," says Miss Martineau, "for the first day or two, before the American Falls, because we found them more level to our comprehension." Says Capt. Basil Hall, "on coming to a scene so stupendous and varied as that of Niagara, the attention becomes embarrassed by the crowd of objects, and it always requires time for the arrangement of the many images suggested, before they can be fully appreciated." This is the general experience. The onward progression and final plunge of the chief Cataracts themselves must be witnessed from several points of view, before they can be said to have been seen, in the sense of being finished or comprehended, as objects of contemplation; and the surrounding and out-lying scenery, must be considered from points of view quite dissociated from the main Falls and their more proximate and naturally allied features. The truth is, the full scope and measure of Niagara is more extensive than is apprehended by many, even, of its most elated and demonstrative admirers. The Rev. Mr. Greenwood of Boston, in 1835, took note, that one must have a knowledge of the place "accumulatively gained," and that would include "its principal accessories," and all "the grand associations with which it is freighted," all of which he says, should be taken into view, if we "would conceive of the Falls as we ought." These are maxims of experience, and are of general application, and they will prove profitable to all who will give heed to the cautions they so forcibly convey. But the master spell of the majestic torrents will nevertheless be upon us and around us; go where we will; and by whatever especial points or phases of beauty our ever rambling, but always entranced vision may be attracted, the final conviction will be ever the same; that the scenic grandeur, the refined and mysterious beauty, the impetuosity and the serenity, the thousand delights and

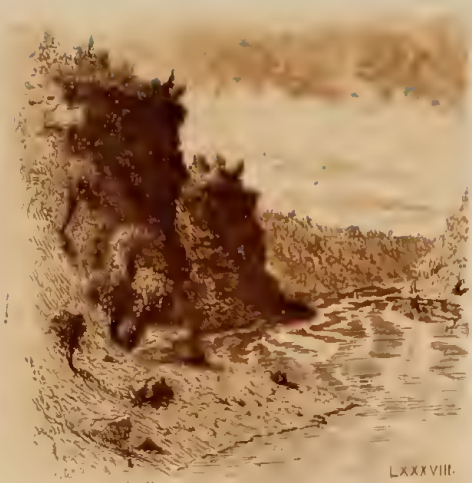




LXXXVII

surprises that combine to make this place the avowed favorite and unqualified admiration of the world, cannot be comprehended, or even seen, in a few hurried visits. There is no possibility of disappointment, of course, upon even the briefest glance. No one could even glimpse Niagara for an instant, and not be moved with that awful yet joyous sense of sublimity and completeness it is always capable of inspiring in the soul of even the most obtuse and apathetic observer. But merely not to be disappointed, is a very different experience from that of the full conception of the overwhelming majesty and serene loveliness of the whole vast spectacle.

The nearest and most popular of all the attractions immediately connected with the Cataract on the American side, is Goat Island; an elevated pile of gravel and rocks that divides the main sheet of the waterfall into two unequal portions, the largest and unquestionably the grandest division lying towards the Canada shore; and it is in this portion that the River has excavated the wonderful angular gap or recess of the Horse-shoe; the crown and glory of the whole phenomenon. For the beauty and variety of its pleasing scenery this fine island has no rival. It sustains a luxuriant growth of lofty forest trees, and tangled thickets and sheltered copses of shrubs and flowering vines, and affords from the foot-paths and carriage drives that extend along the crest of its precipitous sides, most exquisite and enchanting views of both the American and Canadian Falls. No prospect of the Falls in their entirety, nor of the amazing emerald floods of the Horse-shoe, can at all equal those obtained from several points along the Canada shore, and particularly, at and near the site of the now vanished Table-rock; this must be granted without controversy; but next to these superb exhibitions, the most effective and ravishing displays are to be witnessed from this island. It also yields the finest views of the distant and adjacent scenery, including the breakers of the grand upper Rapids, and the quiet depths and lofty precipices of the lower canyon; across which swings, in near view, a light and graceful foot and carriage bridge, suspended, nearly two hundred feet above the surface of the green and quiet water, between the opposite shores, which are here only twelve hundred feet apart. The magnificent panoramic spectacle of the entire front of the Falls, and the associated landscape, that bursts upon the eye of the beholder from the centre of this bridge, will be a surprising revelation to all who have only previously observed it from nearer and more readily reached points. Goat Island is the most inviting, as it is also the most immediately accessible, of the many especially interesting attractions associated directly with the Falls, and is connected with the main shore by a strong and comely bridge. This island, a remnant of the primeval forest, lies directly south of the village of Niagara Falls, and forms a very conspicuous feature in the general landscape.



The impetuous rush of the American Rapids along the shallow rock-strewn channel that separates the Island from the main shore, presents a picture so wild and fascinating, that few will be able to turn from it without many an involuntary and reluctant parting glance. The beauty of the boisterous stream is greatly heightened by the exquisite little rocky islets that here and there thrust their green and bosky heads above the hurrying waters. One of these, and the largest, forms part of the Island bridge, and another, the famous and altogether lovely Luna, lies near the northwest corner of Goat Island and stands upon the very verge of the exposed ledge of the American Fall. From this dry and slightly elevated crag, superb views are

to be had of the American sheet, of the green and quiet basin of the River, one hundred and sixty-five feet below, and of the massive cliffs and palisades of the shadowy canyon through which the River, with recovered and rapidly increasing velocity, speeds on towards the Whirlpool. The locality affords no grander or more agreeably diversified view than this. From this point also the American Cascade reveals its graceful and subtle beauty. This lovely sheet of water, eight feet higher than its more gorgeous, and more stupendous rival, is seen to be spread out into quite a thin sheet in comparison with the amazing depth and coherence of the gigantic waves of its majestic neighbor; but it has innumerable ethereal and alluring charms, that are peculiarly its own. It falls like a curtain woven of glittering jewels, descends in delicate and translucent folds, illumined with sparkling showers of light, and gleams and shimmers with illusive, ever changing, and mysterious, color combinations, the prevailing tints of which are green and rose, with brilliant frost-like scintillations. But the radiance is so diffused, and the general view is so absorbing, and the mental impressions are so calm and so vague, that attention to the niceties of definition and detail is positively excluded. It is simply felt to be incomparably, uniquely—beautiful; and it is the conceded testimony to Niagara and its surroundings, that there exists at least one Nature-embellished spot on the earth, where it is uniformly and superlatively so.

As Principal Grant well says, the true lovers of Nature are shown here, how infinite in variety she is, where they may see that "every day and every hour, her fairest scenes assume fresh phases of beauty." On the south margin of this picturesque Island, near its eastern end, and in the troubled waters of the Grand or Canadian Rapids, lie the fair and favorite group of little islands known as The Three Sisters; three irregular piles of boulders and huge fragments of rock, across and around which swift-flying torrents, hurled from the nearby breakers, leap and scramble with amazing velocity and violence. These islands, covered and shaded by the gnarled and twisted roots and branches of tempest-battered trees, are connected to each other





and to the larger Island by secure and very pretty bridges; upon these the visitor will look with inquisitive surprise, not unlike that of King George, when he confronted the mystery of the dumpling. The water views obtainable in every direction from these islands, far and near—up the broad inclined plane of the turbulent Rapids, the upper boundary of which is the limitless sky, or across the myriad breakers and cascades that leap and clash together in bewildering confusion, between Goat Island and the green shores of Canada,—are exhilarating and joyous in the highest degree. One begins to imagine, here, the magnitude of the stupendous catastrophe towards which, after their long journey, the combined waters of the great central lakes are at last so wildly rushing. Connected with the south-side precipices of Goat Island, and extending across a branch of the principal Rapids to the very verge of the Horse-shoe ledge, and at its northern extremity, lies a shapeless cluster of boulders and fractured rocks, made accessible by the aid of a descending wooden footway. From a narrow, but not permanently secure platform, at the end of this chaotic pile, are to be enjoyed some exceedingly superb views of the central portion of this “prodigious” waterfall. Here, surely will be experienced some new and very thrilling sensations; since one may from these crags, leaning over the brink, and looking down the spray-sprinkled face of the overhanging precipice, a sheer perpendicular depth of a hundred and fifty feet, watch the beaded waters dash over the pile of huge rocks that lie heaped together in confusion below. The great height of these dislocated and unstable cliffs, and the sublimity and magnitude of the vast volumes of water—a

million of tons a minute—seen here to be pouring over them, in one continuous torrent, will now begin to be realized. But not to its full conception; the revelation is not yet complete; for of this amazing mass of water, whose green billows, dashing themselves together, and rolling into and over each other, here, at last, pour down the deep notch and recess of the great excavation of the Horse-shoe, a view still more appalling is to be had from the spray-drenched deck of the little steamer, that glides so pluckily over the snow-like sheet of beaten foam that is spread over the surface of the re-formed, but still agitated water, at the foot of the Cataract. Here surely, as the eye gazes in silent awe upon the slowly descending flood, or follows skyward the ascending wreathes of mist and snow-white spray, far beyond the green and jewelled crest of the waterfall, will the unique glory and overwhelming majesty of Niagara be acknowledged.





But notwithstanding the impressive grandeur of the scene here displayed, it will, after all, remain true, that the one supreme, and most complete and unrivalled view of the Niagara Cataracts in their entire scope, and also, and more especially, of the climax of its immense power and peerless beauty as it is exhibited in the tremendous downfall of the accumulated torrents at the Horse-shoe gorge, will be obtained from the over-hanging rocks that still mark, upon the Canadian side of the River, the site of the long famous projecting slab, now vanished, so familiarly known to all visitors as Table Rock. This broad table or platform, extended out from the upper surface of the precipice far beyond its edge, and directly over the howling Cascades of this end of the Horse-shoe Fall. The point has been trodden by thousands of adventurous feet, though few amongst the crowds who in past years have stood there to gaze bewildered over the brink of this natural cantilever, realized the awful peril in which they stood. Enormous and ponderous fragments of this platform have

at different periods been shaken loose and hurled into the gulf below,

Where the shattered waters rave,
And the winds their revels keep.

The last of these accidents occurred in the month of June in the year 1850; at the hour of noon and without previous warning, and with a terrific crash and a tremor that alarmed the dwellers in the neighborhood for miles around, a huge mass of the projecting rock, over two hundred feet in length and sixty in overhanging breadth, was torn from the brow of the precipice, and dashed to fragments at its foot; and ere one could spring to see what had happened, Table Rock was gone forever. It sank alone in its glory, its mighty fall unseen, but not unfelt; for at the moment of fracture there was standing upon it one human occupant, the driver of the village omnibus, who at the instant was at work upon his vehicle; startled by the first warning crack, a vigorous leap for life across the visibly opening chasm, brought him safely off, with such of his staggered wits as he was able to gather up upon so brief and urgent a notice. It has been aptly said, that the onward roll, at this point, of the vast cylinder of emerald green water, so grandly swelling over the concealed brink of this roaring chasm, resembles the irresistible advance of an immense tidal wave as it plunges up some rock-paved shore, that is still trembling with the sudden shock of an earthquake. Here, as Charles Dickens exclaimed, when this exquisite vision first burst upon his sight, will at once be stamped upon the heart and memory of every observer, "an image of beauty, to remain there changeless and indelible forever." Principal Grant of Queens University, Toronto, has pictured the view here unfolded, in words that render superfluous and iterative all further attempts at a mere verbal description of this scene. To stand, he says, on Table Rock, and watch the Rapids madly rushing down—"to see the grand ocean-like wave rising twenty feet in thickness over the Horse-shoe cliffs, so massive that it retains its smoothness unbroken for some distance after its fall, and so close to where you stand that your out-stretched hand may almost touch it—to look down into the Cauldron where the water lies strangled and

smothered by its own weight, only showing the fierce convulsions beneath by the faintest stirrings, its crystalline clearness changed into a seething mass of curdled foam, which wraps it like a winding sheet—to see the vast volumes of vapor, continually rising and falling, now hiding and now revealing the face of the Cataract, while in its deepest centre and curve, volcanic-like jets break into clouds and soar high into the air—to listen to that “vast and prodigious” cadence, and that melody of many waters, that stirred the soul of Father Hennipin to awe and admiration, and that still excites the same emotions in all who are capable of feeling them—all this affords the truest conception, that any one view can give, of the various elements of beauty and grandeur that are combined to form the Niagara Falls; and the oftener one beholds the magnificent sight, the more wonderful and beautiful is it discovered to be.” Truly so; and the argument will need no confirmation beyond the evidence of personal experience, to be convincing to any one, that from this elevated belvedere, and indeed, from all along the whole superb promenade that stretches from the terminus of the Horse-shoe abutments to the towers of the suspension bridge, and borders upon the dizzy heights of the Canadian walls of the great canyon, are to be enjoyed more glorious, more perfect, and more far-reaching scenic displays of the Cataract as a whole, and, as well, of many of its more especial and local features, than can be discovered from any of the numerous attractive places of observation, that lie in the path of the loiterer along the American shore, enticing and beautiful, for their many delightful and imposing views, as they all are. So redundant in riches, and so diversified in beauties, is this fair River of Delights; whose attractions are as numberless as its waters are inexhaustible. From the Canadian cliffs, with the Niagara and its deep gorge, and all its numberless attractions, always in sight, one can note the peaceful re-union of the engulfed waters of the chief cascades of the Cataract, as they leisurely rise to their new level, and flow together, once more re-formed, out of the turbulent mass of beaten foam into which they have been lashed and churned in the groaning caverns beneath. Here the River is seen, by a sharp angle, to turn abruptly from its north-west course, and to flow onward, now, in a north-easterly direction. Here, after its few delirious moments of chaos and riot, it comes to almost motionless repose, and re-assumes its appropriate hue of leafy green, its panting and gently undulating surface still disturbed by the writhing and struggling of the conflicting waters two hundred feet below. No more exquisite pictures can be imagined than those that are here brought into view. The broad sweep of the whole imposing panorama—the majestic unrolling of the slowly descending curtain of the Falls—the wild tumult of the rebounding jets and billows at their base—the up-heaving and oscillating of the unstable pillar of cloud and vapor, that rises perpetually “like a ghoul of spray and mist from its unfathomable grave, and that will never be laid”—the ethereal rainbows suspended across its glittering front—the brown and precipitous walls of the deep canyon, and the far receding vista of the on-rushing River—the flocks of snow-winged waterfowl hovering over the raging billows—and high above all the clear cloud-flecked dome of blue that crowns the Cataracts’ jewelled brow.





TO NIAGARA.

God of the mountain-height and rolling flood!
 What majesty and might and grandeur soar
 In one unceasing hymn of praise to Thee
 From out the turmoil of NIAGARA'S surge!

Roll on, proud terrorist, with sweep sublime;
 Whose merest touch is as the lusty throes
 Of a whole race of giants, waking from
 A trance of passion, strengthening while they slept.
 The massive oak that has withstood the blasts
 Of centuries, is but a fragile wisp,
 A giant's toy, in thy relentless grasp;
 And man, whose pride would over-awe the world,
 Is but a paltry bubble, in thy hand,
 That passes into nothingness and death.

The crash and wreck of worlds, the sway supreme
 Of nation over nation, and the rise
 And fall of mighty empires,—what are these
 Compared with thee, who seest the ages pass,
 As in a glass: thou art the Merlin dread
 That beckons them to their eternal rest,
 And lulls them into silence with thy psalm.
 The centuries lie buried at thy feet,
 And all their shrouded hosts rise up to pay
 Their great magician homage. Thy dread voice
 Is as the thunder mid the Alpine hills,
 And every sun-flash from thine angry brow
 Seems like the awful lightning of thy wrath.

The children of to-day will have grown old;
 Their children's children, from the ample scroll
 And record where man's generations trace
 Their autographs, shall all have passed away
 And been forgotten; but thy trumpet tones,
 Deep, and sonorous, then as now, shall make
 Of the heart of man a solemn fane of praise.

Æolus' slaves, the rude compliant winds,
 May lash the sea to fury; billows may roll,
 And mountain wave on mountain wave be piled;
 But soon the Spirit of the Storm relents,
 And winds and waves their raging conflict cease;
 Then calm o'er ocean's bosom floats once more
 The gentle influences of rest and peace;
 But thy tremendous voice ascends the skies
 With energy of passion, evermore—
 Unchanged, unchangeable,—making thy song
 A part of the Eternal Harmonies.

CHAS. SANGSTER.

AND now, with such imperfect memoranda in our hands as we have been able from point to point to jot down of its long succession of pleasant surprises and enchantments, we have passed, with still unwearied interest, below the ledge of the Great Cataract, and may contemplate with revived enthusiasm the attractive and bold scenery of the wild deep canyon through which the still beautiful stream glides on towards its next terrific catastrophe, before it tranquilly disappears in the placid bosom of Ontario.

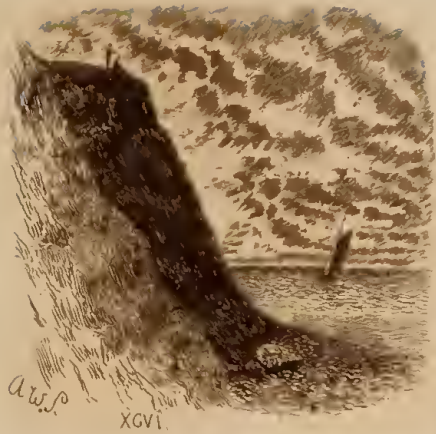
A pleasant thought will occur to the visitor here, as he turns to take a last glance at the wide spread curtain of green and sparkling water slowly descending behind him, ever unrolling but never unrolled,—and that is, that future explorers of these scenes of wonder and delight, will be allowed to ramble and dream here under much more favorable and comfortable circumstances than have heretofore been possible to their really much tried and impertinently persecuted predecessors. No more ticket stands and toll-gates; no more unneeded and misleading guides; no more deceiving hackmen; no more unsightly obstructions; no more paper and wood mills; no more paltry curiosity pedlers; all things and sights, in a word, of a disagreeable nature, all intrusive nuisances, have by concurrent authority of the



Commissioners in charge, been swept, at one fell swoop, from the entire Reservation; and so, at last, nature and order have recovered possession of this most lovely of earth's many lovely spots. This is a grand improvement, judiciously conceived and skillfully consummated, for which its projectors, on both sides the River, will be long gratefully remembered. The pleasure and contentment produced by this fine result, are so welcome and harmonizing, that even "the soft impeachment," not infrequently uttered, of "why was it not done before," is lulled to silence by the prevailing voice of universal eulogy and commendation.

The general plan was originally devised by Lord Dufferin, at the time he was Governor-General of Canada, and was submitted by him, as a project for urgent consideration, to the Ontario Society of Artists, in the fall of 1878. Late in the following month he communicated his plan to the authorities of the State of New York, in a letter to Governor Robinson, by whom it was brought in due form, to the consideration of the State Legislature, in January, 1879. The result of all this was the appointment of a Commission to consider and report upon the proposition. As it contemplated the purchase by the State of about 115 acres of land bordering upon the River, both above and below the Cataract, the project encountered serious and very determined, and, in fact, ill-natured, opposition; notwithstanding which, the honor of first taking practical steps towards its triumphant realization belongs to the Legislature and people of the State of New York; though the hearty co-operation, for their own side of the River, of our equally interested Canadian neighbors, was not long delayed. It is the declared intention of the Commissioners so to distribute the designed improvements, that people who come to the place to seek the quiet enjoyment to be secured through the unembarrassed and leisurcly contemplation of its most marked and distinctive features of beauty, shall now find them in harmonious relationship with the more general attractions of the surrounding natural scenery, so much of which has heretofore been either hidden from observation, or disfigured by incongruities and blemishes that ought to have been excluded long ago.

From either bank of this deep and sharply-cut canyon, and from any point upon its craggy walls, the bold and picturesque beauty of the lower channel of the River is finely seen. Its solid quarry-like precipices are well in view for a long distance, rising to heights varying from two hundred to over two hundred and fifty feet in perpendicular elevation above the green surface of the slowly eddying water, that curls around the massive boulders that lie gathered in scattered heaps along the base of the cliffs. The scenery of this lower portion of the River is everywhere of the most enchanting description; and the beauty of this alone, would draw here its crowds of admirers were there no grand Cataract to constitute the River's chief attraction. One curious effect of the condition of the water, as seen from above, is here to



be noticed, and that is, its compact, solid, glacier-like appearance; due to the enormous lateral compression to which it is subjected, its great depth, and the majesty and unity of its motion, as it forces itself onward, "cribbed and confined" as it is, between the gradually approaching walls of its contracted bed. From the margin of these cliffs will also be noticed, by the most casual observer, unmistakable evidence, graven upon the rocks with a clearness of meaning that precludes all possibility of misinterpretation, that for a distance of at least seven miles, certainly as far down towards the Ontario level as the high hills and bold bluffs that form so conspicuous a feature in the grand panorama visible from the heights of Lewiston, the water of the River, starting from the glacier-scratched ridges of the once

submerged and ice-covered escarpments of the ancient plateau, has excavated, with the effective co-operation of frost and ice, its present deeply cut channel, back from the rocky barrier that once stretched across the southern extremity of Lake Ontario, and only a few miles from it, up to the present position of the Cataract's ledge; a distance of over seven miles. Working its slow way, little by little and year by year, through compact beds of rigid and tenacious rock, which vary in depth from two to three hundred feet, and have an average lateral width of one thousand, the swift flowing water aided by its wintry allies, has cracked and hammered into fragments, and ground and rolled into gravel and mud, and afterwards removed, the entire solid contents of this deep and imposing canyon. And the same tireless and irresistible agencies are still doing their allotted work; but neither the era of its final consummation, nor the resulting consequence of its complete accomplishment, can, at the present hour, with any confidence, be predicted. There is a reasonable probability that as the remaining portion of the excavation, wherever it may terminate, will be carried on upon a much shallower scale, it will be completed in considerably less time than has been occupied in bringing the Cataract from the ancient ridge at Lewiston to the cliffs of Goat Island. And how long that has taken, is naturally enough the inquiry of every reflecting observer of the existing phenomena.

This is a question all obtainable answers to which must still be considered as only hypothetical and provisional. The reply made to it by the practical and clear-headed farmer of Lundy's Lane, that it was "upwards of a good while," will undoubtedly be regarded by many as a correct and sufficient answer; about as near, in fact, as we can just now come to it; though there are a host of dissatisfied and curious investigators who are still striving with hammer and measuring rod, to reach a more accurate count of the silent centuries that have come and vanished since this gigantic excavation was begun. Estimations of the number of years this work has probably required for its accomplishment, are numerous and conflicting. The evidences and data relied upon may seem





reasonable enough, but the essential element of accuracy seems to be wanting in them all. So many fallacies and unsustained guesses have so far entangled the controversy, that it will, no doubt, for a long time yet, be found impossible to harmonize existing assumptions and discrepancies into anything like a consistent conclusion. These estimates, with many lesser differences *inter se*, vary nominally, from a period of thirty thousand years,—a theory which may be rejected, notwithstanding its high sanction, as manifestly excessive,—to the more probable one of ten thousand, which may be regarded as the shortest period, fairly in accord with all the generally accepted facts, that could with reasonable probability be assigned to so grand and extensive a piece of work; a work that has been dependent, throughout its slow progress, upon agencies as deliberate in their processes as they have been conditional in their effectiveness. But all these theories are impugned by the weight they allow to mere conjectures; and the best supported of them carry us no nearer the true measure of the time employed in the recession of the Niagara Cataract, than the cautious judgment of the honest yeoman, that “it has been upwards of a good while,” or the fine apostrophic inspiration of the poet Brainard, uttered over sixty years ago, whose words have a higher and more scientific significance, where he proclaims, addressing the Niagara;—

“Thy flood shall chronicle the ages back,
And notch the centuries in the eternal rock.”

So Daniel Webster, impressed with the evidence that surrounded him of the long duration and apparent uniform character of the retrogression of the Cataract’s channel, exclaims, while “paying homage to this stupendous work of Nature;”—“and there the grand spectacle has stood for centuries, and its unvarying thunder existed before there were human ears to hear it.” How far back in the occult chronology of the globe that would carry us, will long be a topic of conjecture and hypothesis, quite as much so as the equally contested, but locally more interesting question concerning the probable duration of Niagara. But while the differences in the determinations of the time comprised in the epoch of this “notched chronicle,” are expressed in terms of thousands of years, accuracy of result is not even approximately to be looked for. The question is fascinating, as one of curiosity and speculation, but it is hardly one of chronological importance. Whether we allow it to have taken fifty, or only ten, or any other probable number of milleniums, well attested coeval phenomena, the duration of which can be more unmistakably demonstrated, could be easily pointed out, to justify even the longest period that might reasonably be assumed to be indicated by the not easily to be refuted testimony of the rocks.



The next event of any especial surprise in the adventurous career of our famous River, is its rush through the lower rapids, which is immediately connected with its terrific dash across the ragged edge of the gyrating, but comparatively little agitated waters, that fill the deep hollow, long ago excavated by the Cataract, in the angle of the Canadian walls of the canyon, and well known, popularly, though not with strict appropriateness, as the Whirlpool. The River, with its high picturesque and massive walls of water-worn rock, makes at this point an abrupt rectangular turn to the right, and the deep basin of this curious pool lies directly in the angle. The place is remarkable and phenomenally attractive, but in its own right has little claim to its popular designation; which, in fact, it would seem to owe to its close association with the boiling and spouting Rapids that sweep in such tempestuous disorder through the greatly contracted canyon, immediately above it; the leaping breakers dash violently across the crested margin of the less disturbed surface of the pool, properly so called, and the whole wild scene, whether viewed from the over-hanging cliffs, or from the spray-wet rocks at their base, is one of picturesque and unrivalled magnificence. But the ocean-like agitation of the water, is not that of the whirlpool vortex, but of the rapids that dash into it and fly past its more quiet surface with such impetuous and inconceivable velocity. The pool, has a whirling motion of its own, imparted to it by the impinging and skirting surges of the on-speeding rapids; but the motion, though continuous, and irresistibly powerful, is comparatively slow, massive, and eddy-like; its astonishing energy being chiefly exerted beneath the surface, far down in the depths of the basin; out of which it is capable of hurling with ease huge logs and other submerged objects, driven into it by the descending Rapids, which plunge past and over it, with the volume and velocity of the Cataract itself. But for the immense volume of water, by which this concealed riparian gulf is kept con-





tinuously filled to overflowing, there would be seen here, owing to its great depth and the immense quantity of water constantly pouring into it, a cataract of really gigantic force and dimensions; in every feature excepting its width. The sudden angular bend in the River's course, that embraces the semi-circular gorge of the Whirlpool, occurs about two miles below the Cataract; just preceding its tremendous deflection at this point, the River finds itself compressed, by the nearer approach of its imposing walls, to its narrowest width. By this enormous compression the water is heaved up and constantly sustained, by the lateral pressure, in a central surf-like ridge, over twenty feet in height, which entirely conceals for some distance, from either side, the opposite marginal strand of the River. This confused and huddled pile of billows is by its own weight urged onward with terrific vehemence and in the wildest disorder, constituting a spectacle unique in its novelty

and of impressive sublimity. The over-shadowing rocks rise to a perpendicular elevation of over three hundred feet, while the width of the turbulent water is contracted to five hundred. Escaping in haggard disorder from the frantic riot of the demoralized waters of the Whirlpool Rapids, the reconstructed River, with the vigor of its youth renewed, now flows on without much further disturbance, through a lovely and gently meandering high-banked ravine, crowned with lofty trees, and decked with shrubs and pendent vines, till it emerges from its confinement and glides joyously into the welcoming waters of Lake Ontario; where its brief and chequered existence, as the Niagara River, is finally terminated.

Why the River bears the name "Niagara," and by whom and at what time it was so first named, cannot be stated with historical accuracy. It appears to be pretty certain, however, that this name was not the one by which it was known by any native dwellers on the lands lying in its neighborhood, at the earliest period of its discovery by European travellers; as far back, that is, as the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is known also, that a tribe of northern Indians once resided on the banks of the River, who called themselves the "O-ny-a-ga-ra," or, as some have it, the "On-guia-a-ra," or something like this; for the name is spelled in a great variety of ways, whether as an aboriginal tribal name, or as applied to the Cataract. The application of the name to the River and Fall was doubtless made by the missionaries and early white explorers; previous to which it was simply referred to as "The Chute d' Eau," or great Waterfall, as on the map accompanying the account of Champlain's travels in 1613, and also in some of the "Relations" of the Jesuit missionaries. On Sanson's map of Canada, made in 1659, it is called the "Ongiara Sault," and the same spelling is seen on Ducreux's map, printed in 1660, where is shown the place of "The Ongiara Cataractes." The geographer De Norville, in 1687, makes use of the present spelling, but it is not certain that he was the first to do so. English writers, says Mr. O. H. Marshall, were not uniform in their method of spelling the name, until about the middle of the last century. Difference in accent also occurs, as in Goldsmith's line,



"And Niagára stuns with thundering sound."



TO NIAGARA.

Rapt and amazed, midst scenes of rarest loveliness,
Stand I alone, entranced, in awe and ecstasy
Gazing in silence o'er the cliffs precipitous,
Whence, with united front, thy waters ponderous
Tranquilly take their giant leap, Niagara!

Forward declining, wreathed in conscious majesty,
Shimmering spray and jewelled drop, tossed back from thee,
Wave pressed to wave in serried ranks, as, steadily,
Man against man, sweeps on a line of infantry,—
Into the vortex rolls thy flood intrepidly.

In the fierce rapids, many a sharp rock, secretly,
Under thy foaming current lay in wait for thee,
Gashing and tearing thy rent bosom wantonly;
Loveliest of Rivers, sad and dire similitude,
So in life's breakers strives man's heart with destiny.

Tossed in the raging stream by waves impetuous,—
Glamor of hope and youthful dreams deserting it,—
So have we seen,—ah River wild and beautiful,
Art thou not here of "fortune's buffets" typical?—
Under life's chaos sink heart-broke humanity.

Hither and thither whirled in eddies infinite,
Leaping in lambent jets and cascades showery,
Over the sunk rocks pourest thou unceasingly,—
So in life's drift and swirl man writhes defiantly,
Only in wreck, at last, to end, disastrously.

Cometh a change to Life and River, presently;
Out of its perils Life emerges, jubilant,
E'en as thy waters seek in calm serenity,
Under this arched and rainbow broidered canopy,
Torrent immortal, rest an instant in thine agony.

Haste is there none, but eagerness and promptitude;
Frisolous things are cast aside disdainfully;
Nothing the brink can pass but heaven-lit purity;
As on thy emerald crown, we see, Niagara,
Naught but the gem-like gleams from the blue sky over thee,

Out of the far off past emerging regally,
Stately in step, thy grandest one now daring thee,—
Architect fine and subtle, never loitering,
Minute by minute, frost and whirlwind aiding thee,
Toilest thou deftly, thine own highway channelling.

Onward proud River!—many a voiceless century
Into the shadowy past had vanished recordless,
Did not the lines and chinks of thy shrewd chiselling,
Scarring the polished tablets of thy cenotaph,
Tell us the mystic story of thy genesis.

JAS. W. WARD.

